

SUGAR BEETS

PROBLEMS OF BEET CULTURE —SILOING.

By Jesse H. Buffum.

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There are other drawbacks of a minor nature not enumerated. The fault lies not with the fact of siloing so much as with the system now in vogue. There is a general principle worked out in this kind of treatment of beets, with variations originating with different individuals.

In the first place, farmers claim that a considerable loss of weight results from siloing, and the claim is true. One or two experiment stations have conducted tests for determining the exact loss thus occurring, and have made the discovery that beets placed in crucibles, concrete bins, air tight or similar receptacles suffer very little diminution in weight through evaporation, while those exposed directly to air and light lose heavily. On the other hand, those that are covered in the usual manner—with two to four inches of soil—are reduced in weight to a moderate extent. The result of this experiment went to prove that siloing might some day be made practical, through some advanced method, and entailing but slight loss to either factory or grower. Certain-

fulness as good milkers in the dairy, and not for the production of beef, as that should be largely in another line of business.

Where dairying is followed the year round, then it would be well to have cows come fresh in milk at different periods, so as to furnish a more uniform supply during the year.

As the Middle West is so well supplied with markets for dairy products in all directions, there is no reason why with its natural resources it should not be made a most successful dairy region and be particularly adapted to winter dairying.

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ly the tighter and more secure the inclosure in which the beets are stored, the greater the reduction of loss through evaporation.

In practical usage it is noticed that siloing in many instances increases the tare somewhat because dirt that dries and adheres to the beet in that condition is not so easily removed, and about the only means the operator has of decreasing the tare is to strike the beets together as they are handled. This, however, is a minor objection.

Probably the strongest objection raised and the one hardest to meet on the part of advocates of the silo is the extra handling entailed. Certainly this is a very large item, and figures run high in making an estimate of the added cost. It is impractical to expect that the toppers, where siloing is anticipated, can so govern their work as to pile the beets in ricks as they throw them together. The winrows for siloing are so far apart and the area of the field is so greatly diminished by condensing of the tonnage into these winrows, that addi-

tional handling is unavoidable in most cases. Added to this is the uncovering and loading when it comes to carting away.

It is usually an unwelcome task to cover these silo beets. The method generally employed is to plow up a few furrows on each side of the congregated beets, whether they be in circular piles or ricks, this loose dirt being used to throw upon the beets. It is never permissible to place straw, beet tops or old hay—whatever material is used—next to the beets, but these or their substitute are profitably used as a blanket outside the first layer of dirt, to be in turn covered with more of the soil. This method is quite generally employed, but at best is a makeshift and unsatisfactory to all concerned. Should leaves or straw or like substances be placed directly against the beets, they will adhere disastrously and become a source of great annoyance inside the factory. Vents of small caliber should be left at the top to permit of enough egress of air for sanitation.

It is safe to venture, in considering another phase of dissatisfaction with siloing, that the majority of beet growers are, in common parlance, "hard up" at the end of the season, and in

great need of returns from their beets. This should have no part in theoretical discussions, but is of considerable magnitude when it comes to the application of said theories. For the beet grower is as human as any man of the soil, and has made a considerable investment covering five or six months and has waited that length of time for returns on his soil. The delay of pay day even a month is to him a large item in the consideration of siloing as a practical proposition. Most factories are conducted on the plan of advancing part of the necessary expense incurred in growing the beets, but it would be another matter for them to advance additional money on undelivered beets.

One of the foremost drawbacks encountered in siloing is the occupancy of valuable field space. In the first place, that particular patch was chosen for beets because it was one of the best on the farm and would net biggest returns in this crop. Logically, then, it is to play an important and conspicuous part in the coming season. The farmer, if he be at all a capable beet grower, wants badly to get onto that field to either prepare it for next season or sow it to some

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